

**Amendments to the claims**

Claims 1-16 (canceled)

Claim 17 (currently amended): ~~The method of claim 16 further comprising:~~

A method of making a semiconductor device comprising:

forming a conductive layer on a substrate;

forming a barrier layer on the conductive layer;

forming a ~~the~~ dielectric layer on the barrier layer; and

etching a ~~the~~ via through the dielectric layer and a portion of the barrier layer, ~~after etching the via through the dielectric layer, to expose~~ a the portion of the conductive layer above which the via is located; and

introducing a dopant into that portion of the conductive layer.

Claim 18 (original): The method of claim 17 wherein the dopant is introduced into the exposed portion of the conductive layer by depositing a dopant containing layer onto that exposed portion.

Claim 19 (original): The method of claim 17 wherein the dopant is introduced into the exposed portion of the conductive layer by ion implanting the dopant into that exposed portion.

Claim 20 (original): The method of claim 17 wherein the dopant is introduced into the exposed portion of the conductive layer by subjecting that exposed portion to a gas that contains the dopant.

Claims 21-24 (canceled)